

**MEMORANDUM**

Date: December 12, 2007

To: Northampton Planning Board and Sustainable Northampton Steering Committee

From: Ken Buckland and Dale Allen

RE: Changes to Plan for Review at 12/13/07 hearing

Copies:

The following Table represents the changes approved by the Sustainable Northampton Steering Committee after the November 29 public comment period concluded. We have prepared this memorandum to enable clarity on how the plan was changed from the version provided in mid-October. Items in bold are changes within a sentence, whereas the plain text items are new additions to the plan. We have also provided a revised version of the entire plan.

Table 1: Approved Changes by the Sustainable Northampton Steering Committee

Page	Element	New Text or Change
2	Steering comm.	Removed Keith Wilson from Steering Committee
3	Financial	Added Mass Development to list
4	Approach	Inserted at end of current text:  The Sustainable Northampton Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis utilizing a methodology that will be developed in the next 9 – 12 months. The annual evaluation system will be designed to enable a review of the results for the metrics identified in the plan. The results of the annual review will be aligned with the operational and capital budget goals for the following fiscal year.
5	Vision	Inserted new Vision. Inserted text is provided after Table 1.
9	FLUM	Inserted text to clarify difference between Future land use map and zoning map.  The Future Land Use Map is not a prescriptive regulatory document such as the Zoning Map, which requires conformance for land use and development. The Future Land Use Map provides broad guidance for making decisions on all city actions: programs, land use decisions, regulations, and capital expenditures. Zoning Map amendments may be anticipated as one method of implementing the Future Land Use Map and this Plan.

		<p>The Future Land Use Map must be flexible, but with consistent use it will result in an accumulation of decisions that support the City goals.</p> <p><i>Additional Text that describes each segment of the Future Land Use Map has been added and is included after the new vision section at the end of the document.</i></p>
11	Elements	Replaced Historic and Cultural with <b>Heritage</b>
11	Elements	Inserted in Strategies and Action bullet as second sentence: The lead municipal department will be further identified at the time of implementation.
13	LU.1.1.	<p>Inserted text at end.</p> <p>See <i>Density Study</i> prepared by the Office of Planning and Development for illustrations.</p>
19	EEC	<p>Inserted new text box:</p> <p><u>Energy Resources Under Strain and “Peak Oil”</u></p> <p>Peak oil in its simplest definition is a label for the problem of petroleum based energy resource depletion, or more specifically, the peak in global oil production. Whether the extraction of the world’s oil resources will peak next year, in ten years, or farther into the future, or whether energy independence is essential for geopolitical or environmental and climate protection reasons, it is clear that aggressive efforts must be made now to move the City towards substantially reduced overall energy dependency and energy costs. Actions in this plan addressing land use, transportation and the local economy – among others -- are recommended with this reality in mind. The responsibilities of the Energy Resources Commission will include monitoring broader energy trends and events as they unfold, and helping the City and its citizens to understand the potential impacts and to respond accordingly.</p>
19	EEC.1.B.3	Added new objective B.6: Improve the opportunity for residents to dispose of household hazardous waste materials.
19	EEC.1.B.	Along with the word recycle the plan should include <b>reuse</b> as another method for diversion of landfill use- inserted in items 1 and 2.
19	EEC.1.B.3	<p>Changed the objective to read:</p> <p><b>Eliminate use of one-time bottles, bags and other items as appropriate.</b></p>

21	EEC.1	EEC: Added new strategies and actions under waste management:  Continue working with Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection for responsible operation of landfill.  Responsible Agencies: Mayor,, Public Works
33	ED	Corrected spelling to Dickinson in text box
37	ED.4	Added new measurement of progress: Technology Access Metric: Access to broadband technology and to wireless hot spots.  Reporting Agencies: MIS, Mayor's Office of Economic Development  Target: Competitively priced high speed broadband access to 100% of households and businesses. Wireless access hot spots available in downtown and Florence.  Responsibility for Target: MIS, Mayor's Office of Economic Development
39	AC.1	Objective 2 changed direct municipal to <b>public and private</b>
39	AC.1	Added as objective 6. Assist city arts organizations in an effort to establish a collaborative system for addressing issues related to the expansion of local cultural venues and activities.
39	AC.1	Changed first Strategies and Action to: <b>Develop</b> greater cultural coordination in the City; an expanded municipal department, <b>for example</b> , or an umbrella arts and cultural coordinating organizations.
39	AC.1	Changed third Strategies and Actions item to: <b>Expand existing community arts calendar and create a comprehensive</b> Web site and box office in coordination with arts, municipal and tourism entities.
40	AC.2	Changed second strategies and actions to: Identify possible arts venues <b>and seek to provide incentives for private development of venues</b> as part of downtown redevelopment.
41	HR	Added <b>federal</b> to potential funding sources listed in last paragraph in second column.
44	H.1	Added strategies and actions at bottom of column 1: Work with financial institutions to offer financing incentives

		<p>to enable an increased use of sustainable technology by city residents and businesses, such as green mortgages.</p> <p>Responsible agencies: Mayor, City Council, Housing Partnership</p> <p>Lobby to continue the Federal energy tax credit programs. Responsible agencies: Mayor, City Council, Housing Partnership</p>
45	H-2	<p>Changed 2<sup>nd</sup> metric to <b>Decreased number of rental housing units lost</b>. Change 4<sup>th</sup> metric to <b>Decrease number of conversions from affordable</b></p>
52	T-2	<p>Changed Metric 2 to: Rail trails within ½ mile of 70% of households,</p> <p>Changed Metric 3 to: Bicycle lanes within ½ mile of 85% of households</p>
53	T.2	<p>Changed target under Bicycles and Pedestrians to: Increase <b>bike lanes</b> connecting to schools, commercial areas, and neighborhoods by <b>4 %</b> per year.</p>
54	T.3	<p>Added new objective 7: Participate in regional efforts to consider the expansion of passenger rail service along the North-South rail links with service to Northampton.</p>
	Glossary	<p>Added definitions to the glossary for bike lanes and bike ways. Bike ways and lanes – Bike access can be provided as a bike lane within rights-of-way as a shared or separate portion of the paved roadway. Separate paths, not shared with vehicles, but shared with pedestrians, are bike ways.</p>

Revised Vision Statement:

### The Vision

The Northampton that its residents and visitors love today is partly a product of confluences of geography, climate and larger New England settlement patterns. But equally important in shaping our community have been the choices made by its leaders and citizens in years past – conscious decisions about when to invest in industry and commerce, where to encourage housing, how to harness and protect natural resources, how to create jobs, how to develop an educated citizenry, how to welcome and support diversity, and how to provide for artistic and cultural enrichment.

Now, in 2007, the residents of Northampton have an opportunity to provide shape and values to the way Northampton will grow and change in the years ahead. We have the option of letting momentum and inertia shape our future, resting on our laurels and our numerous “Best Of” rankings. We also have the option of critically examining what works about Northampton and what could be improved, consciously shaping a future that takes into account the reality of a world of resources – energy resources, environmental resources, financial resources – under growing strain.

This comprehensive plan, the Sustainable Northampton Plan, represents a decision by its citizens to choose the second option – to grow and change with a full understanding of this generation’s responsibility to leave behind a community that is enriched in a way that will not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This means learning to be smarter about how we use our resources, creatively thinking about patterns of consumption and usage.

In crafting a vision that will impact the natural environment and quality of life at many levels, this plan is driven by concepts of social equity, economic and cultural vitality, and environmental security. Bringing these concepts alive will require a commitment by Northampton’s citizens to:

**Leadership** – locally and regionally - in the advancement of sustainable practices that manage land use for long-term benefits, reduce dependency on nonrenewable fuels, reduce consumption of resources without offsetting benefits, and improve our impact on the environment.

**Inclusiveness, tolerance and civic-mindedness** by embracing diversity and encouraging full participation in community conversations. It is assumed that controversy and debate will only further the discussion and result in greater participation and ownership by the community.

**Vibrancy** as a city that supports the arts, non-profit organizations, higher education and businesses in an atmosphere that allows growth and prosperity while at the same time conserving our heritage, natural resources, and history. We will build on and celebrate our uniqueness as a community and maintain the quality of life that is a strength and competitive advantage.

This vision of sustainability, and these commitments to ourselves and to future generations, will be achieved by following a set of Guiding Principles and enacting specific strategies and actions. Success in shaping the future envisioned by this plan can in many instances be measured by comparing actual performance with quantitative targets included in the plan.

### **Description of Future Land Use Map**

**Agriculture and Historically Compatible Uses**—This is primarily highly productive agriculture land within the floodplain of Connecticut River and

includes rich wildlife and flora resources and historical commercial and residential uses. In this area, expansion of existing buildings and uses is encouraged, acquisition of land in floodplain forests and within the 10 year floodplain is prioritized, but generally new non-agricultural development is discouraged.

**Conservation Development and Sending Zone**—These are outlying areas that generally have moderate to severe environmental limitations, including water supply areas, large intact forest ecosystems, rich wildlife and flora resources, and critical scenic resources. In these areas, conservation of land is prioritized. Many areas are appropriate for context sensitive development and open space residential development designed to be compatible with conservation purposes. Mitigating traffic impacts and providing non-vehicular transportation options that are currently in Traditional Neighborhoods is critical. There are opportunities to transfer the right to develop parcels in this area to other areas in the city that are more appropriate for development.

**Traditional Neighborhood and Receiving Zone** — These are currently the most developed areas with planned expansion of developable area to accommodate expected demand for new growth. These areas can accommodate the vast majority of new smart growth residential development, but only with design standards to ensure that new development does not degrade the quality of existing neighborhoods and mitigates traffic. More focus on design details, encouraging designs compatible with historic neighborhoods, focus on pocket and linear parks and on the quality of life generally are key elements for encouraging a population density consistent with the highest quality neighborhoods present 50 years ago. There are opportunities to accept the development rights into these areas from Conservation Development areas.

**Mixed-Use Commercial Center**—These are the current and proposed commercial areas. In all of these areas housing is strongly encouraged, but only above the first floor. Mixed uses within the district and often within buildings, is strongly encouraged. Design details and pedestrian- friendly development are most important. Regulations should focus on design, mixed use, street orientation, and mitigating traffic impacts. Parking requirements, minimum setbacks and traditional dimensional requirements are far less important in these areas.

**Business, Industrial, Institutional, and Live-Work**—These are the areas that include traditional mill buildings along the Mill River and other business and industrial areas which are appropriate for mixed use. Residential use should be allowed only as part of live-work and artists space, where the primary use is business but business owners and workers may live on the premises. Design details, mitigating traffic impacts, and sensitivity to surrounding neighborhoods are the most important development standards.

Business and Industrial (no residential)—These are the traditional industrial/research/business park sites that should be preserved for business and industrial uses not compatible with residential uses. Traffic mitigation, transit, and site plan requirements are important in these areas.